1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[NET HUNTERS]

[P. 197-A]

truly nomadic group. All metal knife and ax blades are obtained ready-made from the villagers, also metal arrow and spearheads (which are frequently used as knives). The hafting and fitting of shafts may be done by the Pygmy himself, and certainly the arrow shafts are Pygmy-made. Open-mesh baskets (Fig. 41) are made by the women, who also obtain close-mesh baskets (Fig. 42) from the villagers.

DRESS AND ORNAMENTATION

Clothing of the net hunters is also similar to that described by Schebesta, but with less ornamentation of fur and skin and less use of charms and amulets. Putnam denies the use of skins for clothing among the Pygmies he knows. Anne Putnam ranks the manufacture of barkcloth as the major industry in a net-hunting camp, occupying even more time than the making and repair of nets. Putnam once said that the Pygmies did not make nets, but obtained them from the villagers; later, he changed his opinion.[1] A net is never made complete, but in the course of repair pieces are added or removed to start a new net.

1: Turnbull E-4, 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[NET HUNTERS]

000 new net. About 12 different kinds of bark can be
• 287 used for the making of barkcloth, differing not
only in color but also in texture. The ivory bark
287 beaters are always hafted (Fig. 22), unlike those
412 of the archers; the beating ends may have one
of three forms of grooving (Fig. 23), the dia-

[284]

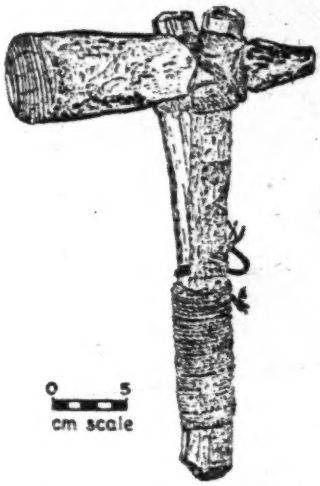

FIG. 22. Bark beater, *kolea*, net hunters, Epulu District, Central Ituri. While wooden beaters are
[237] sometimes used, more frequently the ends of small elephant tusks are hafted and used to make bark-cloth.

[462] [476] [P. 197-B]

[1] In fact, net making is a major and constant activity calling for cooperation between men and women.

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[NET HUNTERS]

[P. 197-C]

287 • 412 [284]

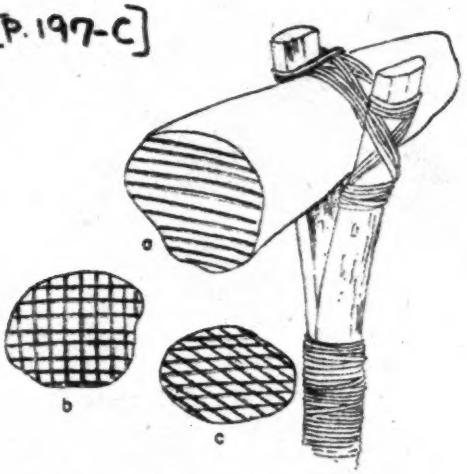

FIG. 23. Types of grooving found on ivory bark-beater heads, net hunters, Epulu District, Central Ituri.

mond grooving being the commonest. There are only about two bark beaters to a camp.

There are two main ways of preparing the cloth. Strips of the bark of *Ficus* are peeled off the trunk between two horizontal and one vertical slit. Before the beating, the outer bark is scraped off, then the inner bark is softened either by being soaked in water from half an hour to 12 hours, according to the type of bark, or by being heated and smoked over a fire.

287 [824]

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[NET HUNTERS]

or by being heated and smoked over a fire. The resultant barkcloth may be worn in its natural color, dyed red or blue, or be painted with simple designs (Figs. 25–27), The dyeing and painting are done by women, using a special mud for an over-all blue dye, the juice of a citrous fruit for blue line designs, and *nkula* (elsewhere *ngula*) bark, scraped with another piece of bark (Fig. 24), with water added while scraping, for

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[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 200-A]

[412]

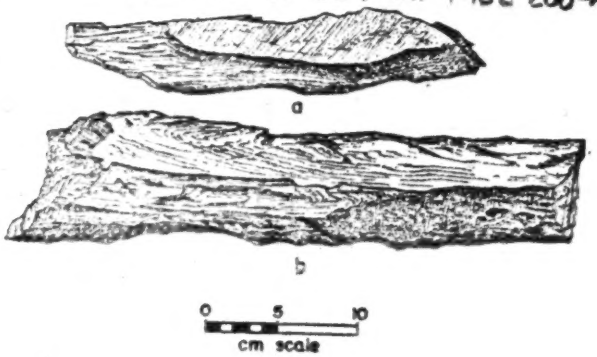

FIG. 24. Block and scraper of wood, *nkula* (also *ngula*), net hunters, Epulu District, Central Ituri; used with water for the extraction of the red dye most commonly employed in the decoration of barkcloth.

[P 199-D]

1: Turnbull E-4.5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
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[NET HUNTERS]

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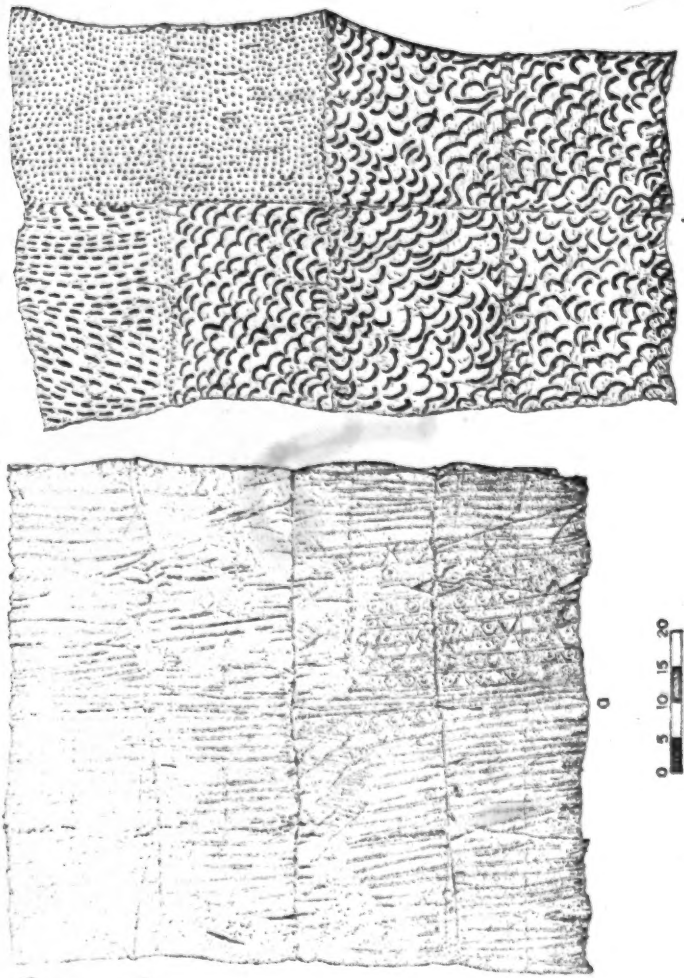

FIG. 25. Barkcloth, net hunters, Epulu District, Central Ituri.
a. Made of *epo'u* vine. b. Made of *esele* vine.

[P.198-A]

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[NET HUNTERS]

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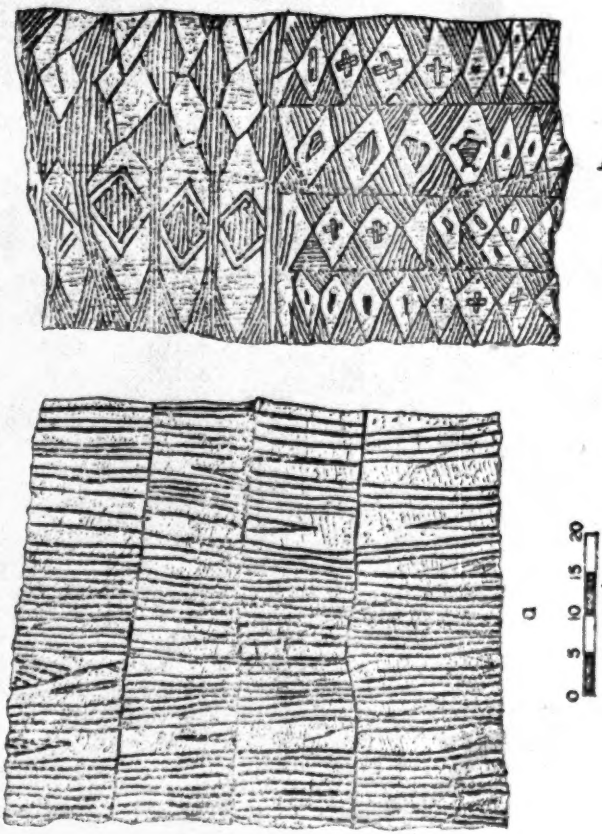

FIG. 26. Barkcloth, net hunters, Epulu District, Central Ituri.
a. Made of *akoko* vine. b. Made of *esele* vine.

[P. 198-B]

1: Turnbull E-4.5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[NET HUNTERS]

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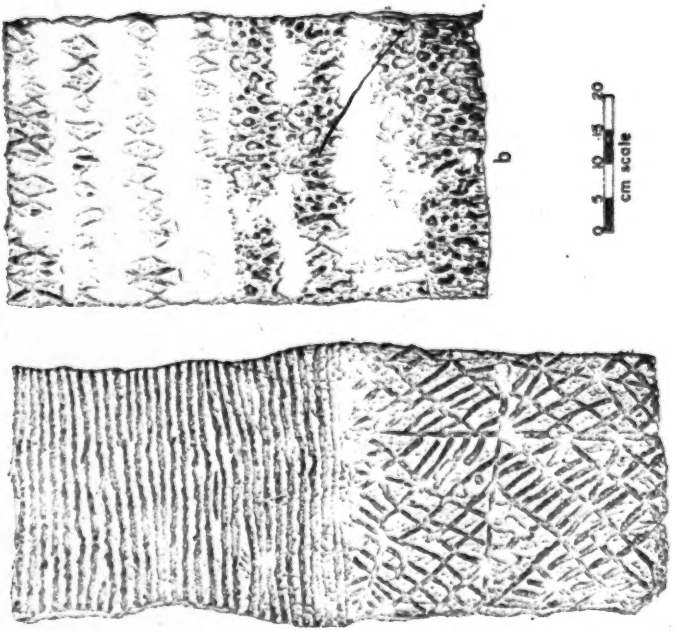

Fig. 27. Barkcloth, net hunters, Epulu District, Central Ituri.
a. Made of *le'ngbe* vine. b. Made of *akbanda* vine.

[P.199-A]

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
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[NET HUNTERS]

[P. 200-A]

red dye. For painting designs on barkcloth, either a finger or a twig may be used. The designs vary considerably, and one piece of barkcloth may have three of four distinct patterns. This is possibly in imitation of the local villager practice of sewing strips of barkcloth together to obtain larger pieces, resulting in the juxtaposition of different designs.

The making of belts (Fig. 28) from plaited fiber and the twisting of lengths of shredded

FIG. 29. Basketry hat, *ngala*, net hunters, Epulu District, Central Ituri. Made at whim by young or old, men or women, and worn without regard to status.

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
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[NET HUNTERS]

CP. 240-C

leaves to cover fires is an effective way of keeping them burning during a rainstorm, is not always accompanied by the production of smoke (thought by some to be an offering), and is never described as being accompanied by any invocation. As far as the descriptions and my own observations go, it could be a simple precautionary measure taken to preserve the all-valuable fire. 789 82 372

Mrs. Putnam was told that barkcloth should not be beaten if it is going to rain, but this may also be for purely practical technological reasons. She once saw an old Pygmy blow a *segbe* pipe a number of times, looking at the sky, in an avowed attempt to avert the rain. When it rained the old man simply shrugged his shoulders and took shelter. 789 82 [287]

On another occasion, when it threatened to rain and spoil the dance one evening, the young men and boys all seized leaves and ran down to the stream and back, beating the leaves on the ground. They evidently did not wait to see if this magic would work, and all retired to their huts.

PLATE 31 1/4

MANUFACTURE OF BARKCLOTH, STRIPPING,
EPULU DISTRICT, CENTRAL ITURI

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Barkcloth manufacture is predominantly the work of youths or young hunters. The first step, after the strip of bark is cut from a vine, is the stripping of the outer bark. Here a youth uses his leg as a platform for support and works with a village-made machete. In the absence of a metal blade, it is said by the Mbuti that they use slivers of bamboo or sharp stones as knives.

1,/Plate 31 appears on page 295--Analyst/

[P.294]

1: Turnbull E-4.5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

1: Turnbull E-4,5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

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516
177

[p 295]. /Plate 31/

/Caption appears on p. 294/

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

PLATE 32

Manufacture of Barkcloth, Hammering and Decoration, Epulu District, Central Ituri

287 412 237 177 a. The stripped lengths of bark are softened in water or over a fire and then hammered out with the end of an ivory tusk. Usually such hammers are hafted, though sometimes they are used, as is the more rare wooden hammer, without being hafted. The tin can, the grass, and the banana leaves indicate that this camp is in the near vicinity of a village.

287 462 531 386 b. Decoration. Women do all the decorating of barkcloth. They smear red *nkula* paste onto the cloth with their fingers, or use small twigs to trace outlines in the black juice of the gardenia fruit or the blue dye obtained from certain citrus fruits.

1, /Plate 32 appears on page 297--Analyst/

[P. 296]

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

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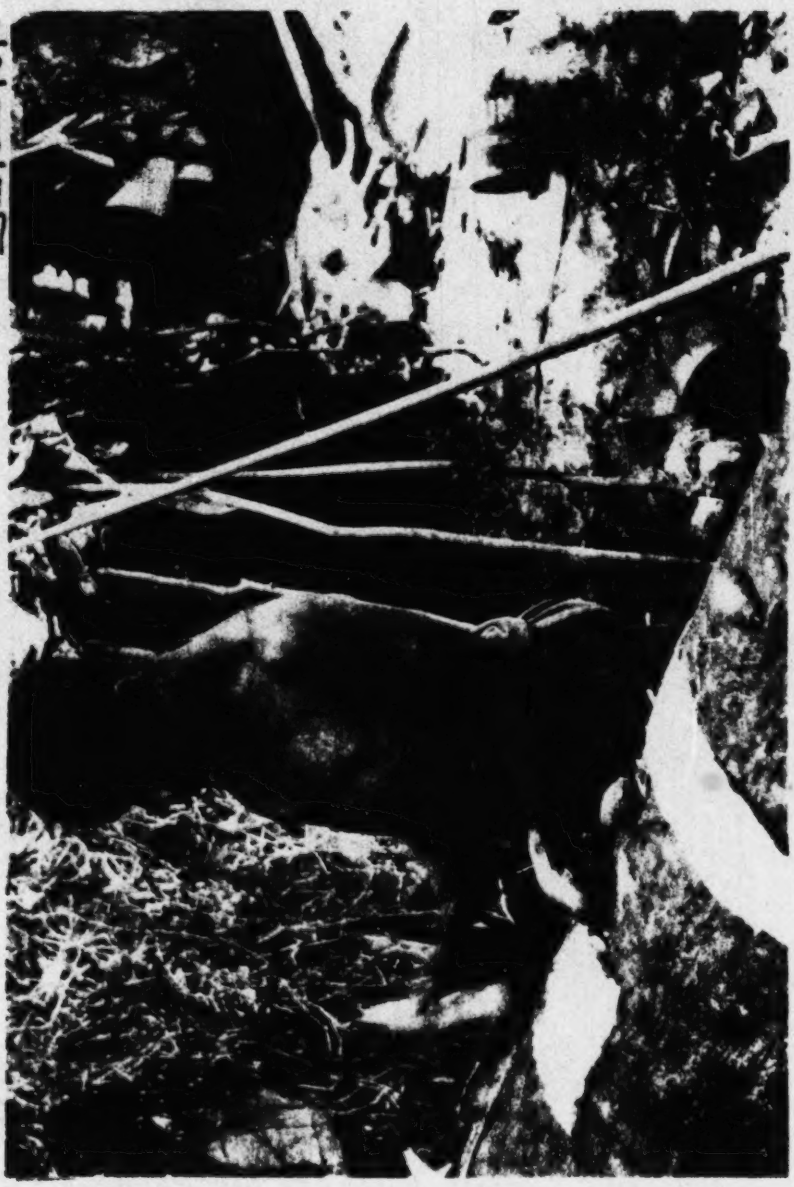

/Plate 32-A/

/Caption appears on p.296/

[P.297-A]

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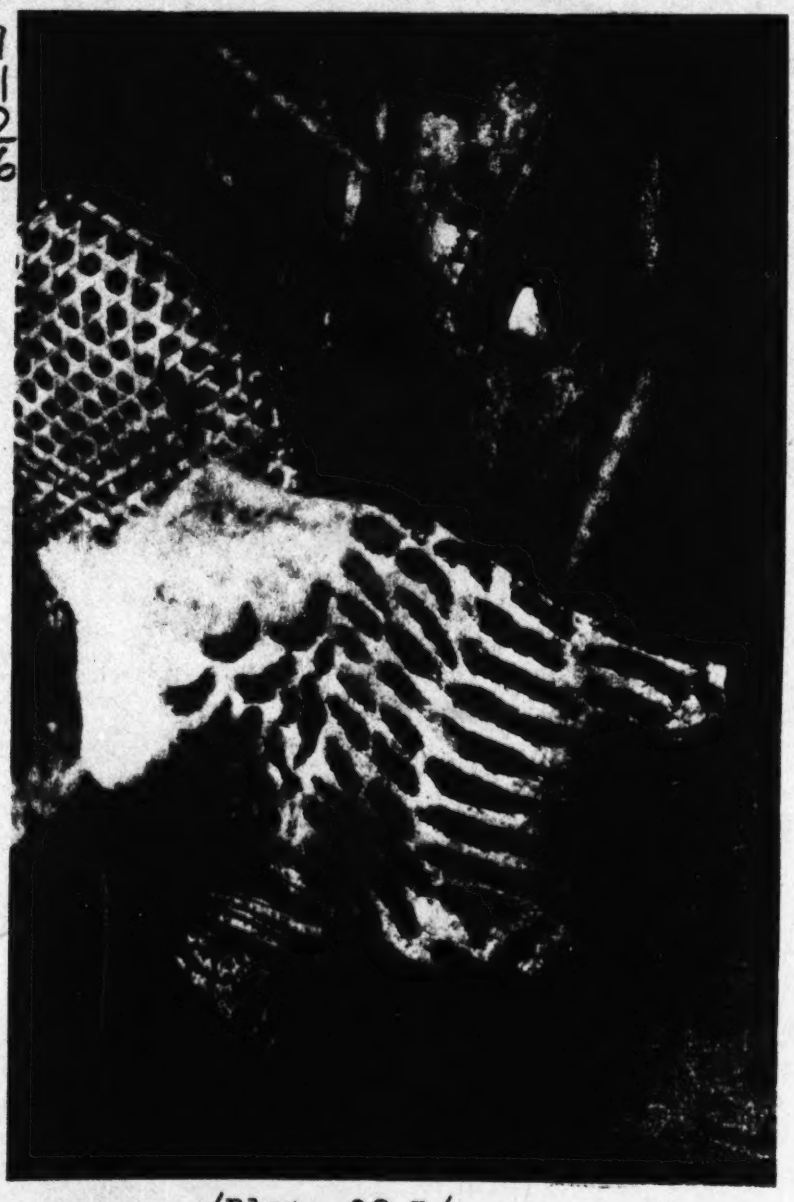

/Plate 32-B/

/Caption appears on p. 296/

[P.297-B]

her milk dries up and the child is given to someone else to feed, or if it is weaned early, then intercourse is apparently resumed. The third father, however, while acknowledging this to be the accepted pattern, began sleeping with his wife again within a month. This he did even though he had the rare advantage for an Mbuti of having two other wives. His action caused a major dispute. (See p. 207 *seq.*)

During pregnancy there are no restrictions; sexual activity in early pregnancy is believed to hurry matters along, and during the latter stages is merely considered uncomfortable, and possibly physically injurious to the child and mother.

As the evening settles in, nuclear families sit around their family hearths outside the huts, talking across the camp at each other until they go inside to sleep, or simply lie down to sleep by the fire (the women nearly always sleep inside, but youths and men frequently sleep on their hunting nets either by their own fire or by a central fire). Even when families have retired inside their huts, conversation continues between them. If there is any singing, other than of lullabies, the camp divides into age groups, each building its own fire. Unless there is an *elima* or *molimo* festival, there is no marked division between the sexes.

On retiring for the night family hearths are brought inside the huts, and any central fires are also brought inside unless someone is sleeping by them. When a central fire is broken up, each family tends to take an ember and add it to their own hearth. A fire is not left untended at night. During the night a man may awaken and stoke up a fire, warming himself by the blaze. At such times, when cold, the Mbuti smoke particularly heavily, and as a result they sometimes fall unconscious. They may fall into the fire and suffer serious burns, occasionally fatal, and this is one of the few generally cited causes of accidental death—other than falling from a tree.

On days when the hunt stays in the camp, because of rain or because some dispute has caused a rift, both men and women attend to specific chores. Men repair and add to their nets and make new bows and arrows; the women roll twine and work at basketry. Both may make and decorate bark cloth, a major activity on such a day. A good part of the day is always given to singing, dancing, playing games and storytelling. There is a constant shifting from family groupings to age groupings, but mealtime is the only time when there is a definite emphasis on the nuclear family. Even then, male youths, hunters and elders may take their food to a central fire and

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[p. 228-C]

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23. A youth, Kenge, strips a piece of bark before it is soaked, prior to hammering it into cloth.

24. Strips of bark, softened by water or smoke, are hammered into cloth up to eighteen inches wide. There are many individual preferences for different types of bark.

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3: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

512 the others who have stayed behind from the hunt have any number of ways of occupying themselves, if they do not want to sleep.

The first time I ever visited a hunting camp I heard its many sounds some fifteen minutes before I finally walked into the clearing. First I heard a sharp, hollow, tapping sound. Then the whole orchestra of children's voices, loudly gossiping women and chattering men blended with the hammering and occasional shouting and snatches of song. In the camp there was only a handful of people; but they were all busy, and when Pygmies are busy they are noisy.

287 [237] [412] A youth was standing beside a fallen tree trunk, pounding away at a narrow strip of bark with the end of an elephant tusk, hafted simply into a wooden handle. He was making the bark cloth that is the main clothing of the Pygmies. Although more and more of the men are getting used to the European-style clothes of the villagers, in the forest they still prefer bark cloth, which is easy to make and costs nothing. There are several vines that yield a suitable bark. After a strip has been cut it is laid over an outstretched leg while the artisan chops casually away at it, removing the outer bark. Then it is either [386] soaked in water or mud, the mud giving it a bluish color, or softened by smoking it over a fire. After that it is spread over a fallen tree trunk and beaten with an ivory tusk. It spreads out into a soft, supple cloth, the texture varying with the type of bark.

386 287 462 There are many fashions in bark cloth, not only in the choice of a particular bark, but in the way it is dyed or decorated, and also in the way it is worn. The women nearly always do the decorating, using *nkula* bark to make a red paste, or the gardenia fruit, *kangay*, for black dye. On certain barks the juice of a citrous fruit stains the [516] material blue. As often as you see a man making cloth you will see a woman sitting down, legs straight out in front, as always. Her simple tools lie around her, and the bark cloth is spread over her thighs. If she is using the red nkula, first of all she has to rub two pieces of the wood together, with a little water to turn the powder

3: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

into paste. Then, using a finger, she daubs the fresh cloth, which may be white, fawn, brown, or blue, with bright splotches of red. If she is using the fruit juice she carefully collects it in a cup made from the hard shell of some forest fruit, and with little twigs she draws fanciful patterns of straight lines, crisscrossing the cloth with unconventional Pygmy geometry. When the cloth is finished she throws it over the roof of her hut to dry, and looks around for something else to do.

Women usually work in twos or threes for company, and nearby a friend will be attending to some other womanly task. They spend hours at a time making the elaborate belts which hold the bark cloth in place. The material culture of the BaMbuti is minimal, and simplicity and utility are usually the main characteristics. But there is nothing simple about the belts they make. A single belt takes several weeks. First the vine has to be collected, dried, and shredded. Then the strands are tied around a stout twig in the ground. The woman holds the stick firmly between her toes and pulls a number of the strands to form the core around which she braids an outer binding. There may be as many as two hundred braided lengths to a single belt, bound decoratively in the center. Each end is worked into ties for fastening the belt tightly so that it will not only hold the bark cloth in place but also support knives, machettis, and the bundles of roots and other things that Pygmies tie to their belts while on the trail, to leave their hands and arms free.

The same vine, nkusa, is used for making hunting nets. After it has been shredded it is deftly rolled on the thigh, one strand being rolled into the end of the next so that when two strands are twined together a woman can present her husband with a length of stout cord long enough to add several feet to the family hunting net. Net-making is virtually a full-time occupation, and one in which both men and women indulge whenever they have both the spare time and the inclination. Few occupations are strictly reserved for either men or